

November 11, 2009



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Dear Friend,

As we commemorate Veterans Day today, we are reminded of the cost of freedom all around us: the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the jarringly cruel events at Fort Hood, Texas, last week; and the tragic deaths late last month following the mid-air collision over the Pacific involving the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Marine Corps.



Barbara Kennedy

That our beloved troops find themselves in harm's way abroad, on rescue missions and even in the sanctity of one of our own Army bases underscores the redoubled risk of our times. So it is an honor and privilege for me to recognize the Veterans here in the Third District.

Today I am participating in an annual event at Mather Field that is co-produced by the city of Rancho Cordova and the Mather Veterans Hospital. This year's theme is women in the military. In the spirit of that theme, earlier this year I became aware of four very special women who had served in the military during World War II.

These four ladies answered a dangerous call to duty to be the first women to fly U.S. military aircraft for their country. All available men already had been dispatched to the war theaters in Europe and in the Pacific. Working with some visionary women pilots in experimental units of the then-U.S. Army Air Corps, Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold was eventually convinced there was a need and a role for women in



**Upcoming Town Hall Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 12**

**7:00pm-8:30pm**  
La Sierra Community Center  
John Smith Hall  
5325 Engle Road  
Carmichael, CA 95608

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the war effort. The Army put out the word for volunteers to become pilots in an experimental force that would operate as kind of a civil air unit performing mostly domestic missions. A patriotic wave of 30,000 applied between 1942 and 1944, but only a little over 1,000 eventually passed muster and got their "wings." By 1943 they had come to be known as the WASP: Women Airforce Service Pilots.



**Doris Ohm**

Our four distinguished WASPs are: Dorothy C. Goot and Captola Johnson, both of Fair Oaks; and Barbara H. Kennedy and Doris K. Ohm, both of Sacramento. They were accepted into the group, which flew over 12,000 missions while incurring 38 casualties. They ferried planes from base to base. They were "test" pilots for newly repaired aircraft and some were even asked to tow targets behind their planes so anti-aircraft personnel and fighter planes could conduct target practice. Though their

patriotism and bravery cannot be overestimated, their humble dedication and "Gosh I was just doing my job," attitude remains today.

Though they left the WASP service without being afforded Veteran Status, that was changed from by lobbying efforts and legislation between 1977-1979. But there was more to be done this year. That's why my colleague Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18) authored legislation ([H.R. 2014](#)) to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the WASPs. I signed on as a co-sponsor and the bill passed and was signed by President Obama in July.

Fewer than 300 WASPs of the original 1,100 survive today. I have the opportunity to thank three of these four ladies today. And all those in attendance will get to see some real, live American women military heroes in person.

Later today, I will visit the American Legion Post 108 in Amador County for an event honoring their Veterans. But it will also be a special day in that Post's history. It was formed 90 years ago to the day. Exactly 80 years ago, the post began an ambulance service – one of only a few such operations in the country – that still serves the people of

## Dorothy Goot

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**Captola Johnson**

Amador County. In 2004, the American Legion Ambulance Service added nearby Calaveras County to its service area. I will be there to not only recognize the service of our Veterans, but to also present a copy of the Congressional Recognition honoring their ambulance service.

Today, I salute all of our Veterans and thank them for their service and commitment to our great country.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Lungren  
Member of Congress

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